

**DATE ISSUED:** July 6, 2006

**REPORT NO. PC-06-209**

**ATTENTION:** **Planning Commission, Agenda of July 13, 2006**

**SUBJECT:** ARBOR CREST NORTH - PROJECT 89239 - PROCESS 4

**OWNER:** Jan C. Rosciszewski, Trustee of the J.J.R. Family Trust

**APPLICANT:** North Crest Partners, L.L.C.

**SUMMARY**

**Issue(s):** Should the Planning Commission APPROVE an Affordable/In-Fill Housing Expedite project to construct a 72-unit residential condominium project on a .99 acre site located at 3783-3825 Florida Street, within the Greater North Park Community Plan area?

**Staff Recommendation:**

1. **CERTIFY** MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION No. 89239, and **ADOPT** the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP);
2. **APPROVE** Tentative Map No. 286308 and
3. **APPROVE** Site Development Permit No. 285175.

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** On June 20, 2006 the Greater North Park Community Planning Committee voted 9-0-1 to recommend approval of the project.

**Environmental Review:** Mitigated Negative Declaration No. 89239 has been prepared for the project in accordance with the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, which address potential impacts to archaeology and paleontology. A Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) has been prepared and will be implemented with this project to reduce the impacts to a level below significance.

**Fiscal Impact Statement:** None with this action. All costs associated with the processing of this project are paid from a deposit account maintained by the applicant.

**Housing Impact Statement:** The proposed project will add 60 market-rate residential units to the community (demolition of 12 units and the construction of 72 units). The Greater North Park Community Plan identifies the site as Very High Residential (55-75 DU/NRA), with an underlying zoning of MR-800B within the Mid-City Communities Planned District, which allows a density of 73 dwelling units per acre.

As a component of the application, the project will conform with the Inclusionary Affordable Housing Requirements and Council Policy 600-27(A) criteria for the Affordable/In-Fill Housing Expedite Program by providing at least 10 percent (8 units) as affordable off-site in the Arbor Crest South project (a 71-unit affordable housing apartment project), one block south on Florida Street. The Arbor Crest South project will be setting aside 71 residential units (100% of the project) for occupancy by, and at rents affordable to, households earning no more than 60% of the area median income (AMI), currently \$64,900 for a family of four.

## **BACKGROUND**

The project is located at 3783-3825 Florida Street, between University and Robinson Avenues. The .99 acre site is composed of 12 lots currently developed with 8 single- and multi-family structures which will be demolished to accommodate the new development. The site is designated High/Very High Residential (55-75 DU/NRA) within the Greater North Park Community Plan (GNPCP), is zoned MR-800B in the Mid-City Communities Planned District, and is within the Transit Area Overlay Zone and the North Park Redevelopment Area. The Community Plan designation allows up to 74 dwelling units, the zoning designation allows for one unit per 600 square feet of lot area, or 72 dwelling units.

The site is located on the east side of Florida Street. The site slopes down approximately 33 feet from Florida Street, east toward the alley and slopes approximately 4 feet from the north end of the site to the south along the street and alley. Adjacent properties are zoned MR-800B and are developed with multi-family structures. The inclusionary housing requirement (8 units) for this project is being met off-site at this Arbor Crest South project, a 71 unit for-rent affordable housing development one block south on Florida Street.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Description:**

The project is located on a .99 acre site in the middle of the block on Florida Street, between University Avenue and Robinson Avenue. The site is composed of 12 lots, to be consolidated under the Tentative Map and developed with a 72-unit market-rate condominium development. The applicant has agreed to provide 8 units as affordable at an off-site location within the same community planning area (within the Arbor Crest South project, one block south). The unit breakdown includes 15 one-bedroom units, 53 two-bedroom units and 4 three-bedroom units. The project includes 5,228 square feet of common open space within an interior courtyard at the plaza level with tables, chairs, benches, trellises and barbecues. A total of 131 off-street

automobile parking spaces, 8 motorcycle spaces and 36 bicycle spaces will be provided within a two level parking garage. Parking access is from the alley. The development has the appearance of six separate buildings with a combination of gable and flat roofs, exterior balconies connecting the buildings and private exterior balconies for each of the units. The building appears to be 4 stories as viewed from Florida Street and 4 stories over two levels of parking as viewed from the alley.

Development of the proposed project requires the approval of a Process 4 Tentative Map for the creation of condominium units, and a Site Development Permit for exceeding the number of threshold dwelling units per the Mid-City Planned District Ordinance, and for deviations to height, setbacks, gross floor area, and street yard requirements.

**Community Plan Analysis:**

The project site, located at 3783-3825 Florida Street, contains approximately 43,350 square feet of area, is designated High/Very High Residential in the Greater North Park Community Plan, and would allow development of 55-75 dwelling units per acre because the project is proposing parcel accumulation along with implementation of the Urban Design Element of the Plan. According to the Land Use Element of the Plan, the site could accommodate up to 74 dwelling units. Therefore, the proposal to construct 72 residential units would implement the Land Use Element.

The Urban Design element of the Plan recommends that new buildings be in character and scale with their neighborhoods. Further, harmony should be promoted in the visual relationships and transitions between new and older buildings. New buildings should be made sympathetic to the scale, form and texture of surrounding development. The proposed building is in character and scale with other multi-family residential complexes in the area, and would implement the recommendation.

Policies embodied in the Urban Design Element of the GNPCP recommend that where new buildings reach exceptional height and bulk in comparison to existing structures, large surfaces should be articulated and textured to reduce their apparent size and to reflect the pattern of the surrounding development. Upper floors should be designed so that they actually, or appear to, set back and recede. Further, building bulk should be controlled through the use of vertical and horizontal offsets and other architectural features which serve to break up building facades. The proposed design includes articulated vertical and horizontal planes which appear to break up the building facade. Therefore, the proposed design would implement the recommendations of the Urban Design Element.

Plan recommendations for enriching the pedestrian experience include increasing sidewalk widths where appropriate, identifying street tree themes to create neighborhood identities through coordinated street plantings, increasing pedestrian-oriented lighting, and varying pavement materials. Specifically, the plan suggests enhancing Florida Street as a landscaped parkway between Balboa Park and Trolley Barn Park. Extensive tree plantings should be provided or preserved to enhance the visual quality of public streets and provide a strong element of continuity. The proposed landscape development plan indicates that Florida Street would be

landscaped with street trees, lawn, and accent trees and shrubs. Therefore, the project would implement the plan recommendations for enriching the pedestrian experience and creating a landscaped parkway. The Plan also recommends providing non-contiguous sidewalks in residential neighborhoods. The project proposes non-contiguous sidewalks along the Florida Street right-of-way and would implement the plan recommendation.

The Urban Design Element of the Plan recommends that on-site parking should be underground or located in the rear of buildings and accessed from the alley, and the facilities should be screened or located in areas not highly visible from the street. The project proposes to provide underground parking with alleyway access, and would implement the plan recommendations.

The Plan recommends the provision of on-site recreational facilities in conjunction with new larger residential projects. The project proposes to provide a community room and 5,228 square feet of common open area with picnic and barbeque areas which would meet recreational needs of future residents, and would implement the plan recommendation.

### **Environmental Analysis:**

The City of San Diego conducted an Initial Study which determined that the proposed project could have a significant environmental effect on archaeological and paleontological resources. According to the City's Historical Resources Sensitivity Map, the site is located in an area with a high potential for subsurface archaeological resources. The project site is also underlain by the San Diego Formation, which has a high sensitivity level with respect to fossil resource potential. Project grading would consist of exporting approximately 18,350 cubic yards of cut at depths of up to 32 feet. Due to the quantity of cut, the previously recorded archaeological finds in close proximity to the site, and the potential to impact archaeological finds on-site, archaeological monitoring would be required during grading. In the event that such resources are discovered, excavation would be halted or diverted, to allow recovery, evaluation, and recordation of materials. According to the City of San Diego's Paleontological Guidelines (Revised April 2004), over 1,000 cubic yards of grading at depths of 10 feet or greater into formations with a high resource sensitivity rating would constitute a potentially significant impact to paleontological resources, and mitigation is required. Therefore, the Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program, as detailed in Section V of the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) No. 89239 would be required. The MMRP includes archaeological and paleontological monitoring. Implementation of the MMRP would reduce the project's impacts to below a level of significance.

### **Project Analysis:**

The project was reviewed against, and is in compliance with, the MR-800B zone of the Mid-City Communities Planned District (MCCPDO). The project requires a Site Development Permit for exceeding the number of threshold dwelling units (30 units) within the MR-800B zone of the MCCPDO, and for the following deviations from the development regulations:

Deviation to Building Height: The MR-800B Zone allows a maximum structure height of 60 feet, and an overall structure height of 70 feet (due to a 32-foot grade differential on the property). The project proposes a structure height of 69-feet along portions of the east elevation and an overall structure height of 82'-4". The project site slopes down over 32 feet from Florida Street east towards the alley, and slopes over 4 feet from the north end of the site to the south along the street and alley. Lowering the overall building height would eliminate one floor (26 units), which would negatively impact the project's ability to provide affordable housing and would likely push the developer to pay a fee in-lieu of providing affordable housing or abandon the project all together. Further, it would result in underutilization of the site by providing 46 dwelling units where 72 would otherwise be allowed. Due to the present housing state of emergency in San Diego, the City Council's goal to encourage affordable housing, and the topographic constraints of the site, the deviation will result in a more desirable project than would be achieved if designed in strict conformance with the height regulations.

Deviation to Front Yard Setback: The project proposes a 6'-9" front yard setback to building walls and a 4'-9" front yard setback for porches and balconies where 10'-0" is required. The deviation to the front yard setback is the minimum necessary to provide Fire Department aerial ladder access for buildings over 35' high, and allows for adequate landscaping, pedestrian access and building articulation that are appropriate for this location.

Deviation to Side Yard Setback: The project proposes an 11'-6" side yard setback for stories above the 4<sup>th</sup> story where 15'-0" is required. Staff can support the side yard setback deviation as it is minimal and allows for adequate landscaping, pedestrian access and building articulation that are appropriate for this location.

Deviation to Floor Area: The zone allows a floor area ratio of 1.25 with a bonus up to 1.0 for underground parking area. The project is proposing 90,844 square feet of floor area above grade where 80,002 would be allowed (2.10 floor area ratio where 1.85 is allowed). Staff can support this deviation to floor area as it allows the project to be built out to the maximum density of 72 units and will materially assist in accomplishing the goal of providing affordable housing opportunities in a neighborhood that would greatly benefit from them.

Deviations to Minimum Street Yard: The project proposes a deviation to reduce the street yard requirement by 334 square feet, providing 5,446 square feet where 5,780 square feet is required. This deviation is minimal and is the result of the front yard setback deviation that is necessary to allow for Fire Department aerial ladder access for buildings over 35' high.

Emergency Response Times – The proposed development site is within an existing urbanized area currently serviced by police, fire and emergency services. The emergency response time from Fire Station 5, located at 9<sup>th</sup> and University, to the project site is approximately 2.8 minutes. The project site is also located within the San Diego Police Department's Western Division, located at 5215 Gaines Street, which has an average emergency response time (Priority E) of 7.26 minutes and a response time (Priority 1) of 13.58 minutes.

## **Critical Project Features to Consider During Substantial Conformance Review**

The building design and/or site design should be fully analyzed to ensure that changes would reflect the type of multi-family development that would be compatible with the existing surrounding neighborhood and to ensure compliance with the goals and objectives of the Greater North Park Community Plan.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposed request for the construction of a 72-unit residential condominium development meets the goals of the Greater North Park Community Plan. Although the project proposes deviations to structure height, gross floor area, setbacks and street yard requirements, for which staff believes findings can be made, staff supports the proposed project. It is consistent with the recommended land use, design guidelines, and development standards in effect for this site and would not have an adverse impact on the Greater North Park Community Plan.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. **Certify** MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION No. 89239, and **Adopt** the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP); **Approve** Tentative Map No. 286308 and Site Development Permit No. 285175, **with modifications**.
2. **Do Not Certify** MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION No. 89239, and **Do Not Adopt** the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP); **Deny** Tentative Map No. 286308 and Site Development Permit No. 285175, **if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed**.

**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Mike Westlake**  
**Program Manager**  
**Development Services Department**

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**Leslie Goossens**  
**Development Project Manager**  
**Development Services Department**

MW/LG

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Project Site Plan
6. Tentative/Vesting Tentative Map

7. Project Elevations
8. Draft Map Conditions and Subdivision Resolution
9. Draft Permit with Conditions
10. Draft Resolution with Findings
11. Community Planning Group Recommendation
12. Ownership Disclosure Statement
13. Project Chronology